1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

number ten or six. The *tauvu* of Narothake is Notokalau in Ovalau, because of Mbatininggaka. The clans of the village are:

Vialailai	Vialailai
Vialevu	{ Nayala { Nasikethi

In Yandrana the clans are:

Mbaumbunia	{ Nandawa { Lomanikoro { Nasuthu { Natalenggitawa { Namolutu	Thenu Sau	{ Namana { Mbutukoro { Mbutoisau { Nakorolailai
Yawalevu	{ Nautuutu { Natavua { Keloa		

The first seven Tui Yandrana were of Mbaumbunia; since then they have belonged to Thenu. The present Vaka is of Yawalevu. The Vaka is "The Speech of the Land" (*vosa ni vanua*). If the chief decides a thing he tells the Vaka to inform the people. The Tui Ra belongs to Thenu. Nasau and Yandua in the island of Ngau are *tauvu* to one another.

ISLANDS SUBJECT TO LAKEMBA

Relationship

The Fijian word for subject is *nggali*; Fison (4) connects it with *nggali* (to roll string). A *nggali* is therefore a strand of string and means properly a group of people, as in *matanggali*, a clan; but it usually conveys the idea of subjection. The land or chief that brings a country into subjection to another is said to "bring it to . . ."; or to "turn it round" (*vukitha*). There are various degrees: a people who are very much subject (*nggali sara*) obey (*vakarorongo*); the extreme is to be very serfs (*kaisi sara*), or a chief's very own men (*tamata ndina sara nga*). On the other hand, a land which goes to another may merely recognize its hegemony.

The Roko Sau rules all the villages of Lau. The islands of Thithia and Naiau are subject to Lakemba, but they stand apart from the rest of Lau. Oneata, Mothe, Kambara, Fulanga, and Ono each form a *matanitu*—a word which means literally "face of the chief," but may be translated as "state."

The people of these islands give the salutation called *tama* (p. 48) to the nobles of Lakemba: some salute the Tui Tumbou in this way, some do not: a few will do it for the Tui Nasangalau. They also clap when a noble washes his hands after a meal. Formerly they lowered their sails as they came into Tumbou and paddled to the anchorage; they walked about Tumbou with folded arms.

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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The village of Lakemba is said to be hard to beat at cricket, because it is the dwelling place of Roko Sau.

Lakemba is called *a yatho,* "one that has arrived," because it is the place where Roko Sau dwells.

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One informant draws a picture of an ideal chief:

> Of old, Tui Naiau was as our father. If people wanted manufactured articles they went and begged of him. The people of Lakemba went to the nobleman on whom they leaned for support, and he would take them with their small feast to Big House. It was hard for the chief to refuse a thing: all the food brought to him was distributed among them all.

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The chief's dues were described by the following terms:

> If a chief wanted a thing he told a village to do it. This is called *lala.* [May be translated as requisition, statute labor corresponding to the Sinhalese *rajakariya,* "King's work."] The chief had to feed the people who worked for him, and the feast so made was called *otho.* Formerly a chief killed himself with work on account of his requisitions because he had to attend to the men who came to do statute labor for him.
>
> The *vatongia* of Tui Naiau is defined as "making feasts, statute labor, house building." Formerly, it consisted in planting once a year; for the rest of the year there were only feasts.

The *vakathavathava* is somewhat vague because the Tongans changed so much. It was said to have been a big feast once a year. Each village in turn brought a feast. The term is now used of taxes.

MINOR CHIEFS OF TUMBOU

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The head of each clan usually bears a title, which, like that of the High Chief, tends to pass from elder to younger brother. A clan is more commonly designated by the title of their head than by its name. Thus the clan of Narewandamu is usually spoken of as the heralds, or envoys to Mbau.

The name of the clan of Vale Lailai means the little house as opposed to the Big Door. Two divisions of Little House, namely Tandravula, now extinct, and Narewandamu, are called *mata ni vanua,* "Face of the Land," a term which I propose to translate "heralds." They are the "speech of the nobles." They receive or present food and stuff at feasts and are generally masters of ceremonies. These functions are called *veinggaravi,* from *nggara* "to face," "attend on," "serve," all meanings derived from the fact that in a ceremonial two parties always face one another. The heralds are also envoys to Mbau, and are oftener addressed as Matakimbau than as Matanivanua.

Katumbalevu proper are "indoor heralds" (*mata ni vanua i vale*). They

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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have nothing to do with feasts out of doors, but only when these are brought in to the Lord of Naiau. The share that falls to the Lord of Naiau they divide. They do not speak out of doors; Narewandamu speak out of doors. They are described as "the Land of Navuanirewa" as opposed to the "Land" pure and simple, that is Tumbou.

The heads of Katumbalevu proper and of Narewandamu are the Lord of Naiau's "old men." They should be in his presence every day.

Thekena is spoken of as "the Land" in contradistinction to the nobles. The title, Vakavanua, the adjective of *vanua* (land), is usually shortened to Vaka. One tradition relates that he was the chief of old; but the High Chief declined and became Vaka.

The chief of Tanggalevu is called Tui Tumbou. The title was given to a member of the oldest generation, but of the lesser "edge of the oven." The head of the senior branch was addressed and officiated as Lord of Tumbou in the absence of the real one. The original functions of the Lord of Tumbou are not known, but at present he fulfills most of the functions of a herald, excepting the distribution of feasts. It was he who apportioned the kava and directed the reception of high officials. He is the "mouth of Tui Naiau." The High Chief does not speak; the Lord of Tumbou speaks. It was said that the third Lord of Naiau appointed the Lord of Tumbou to this office in place of the heralds who had a bad name for murdering chiefs. The Lord of Tumbou also bears the title of Ramasi, Sir Cloth.

An informant says:

> Vakavanua, the Land Chief, is higher than the Lord of Tumbou. If there is a fight and the heralds go to stop it and do not succeed the Lord of Tumbou will go. If he fails, the Land Chief will go; when he appears, all things cease. The Lord of Tumbou and the Land Chief are weighty delayers of anger. The nobles may not hit each other in presence of the Land Chief, the Lord of Tumbou, or a herald. If the High Chief wants to sleep and his household or the herald comes and tells the Chief and utters the name of Land Chief of Lord of Tumbou, when he hears it, it is hard for him to lie down again on his bed: he knows it is something serious.

I know of no title in Tuware. This clan were the *mataivalu kalou*, that is, "spirit battalion." They went first in war and though all Lakemba retreated, they still advanced.

One Tongan bears the title of Moala, which is said to mean navigator.

The Tongan term *matapule* is constantly used to denote these minor chiefs. Strictly speaking, *matapule* is the equivalent of the Fijian *mata ni vanua* or herald, but it is said to be "a polite word for old men." I have heard the Fijian *matanivanua* used in the extended sense, for instance, for the chief of Levuka. They are also called "chiefs of the land," or "old men of the land." Any of them could intercede with the High Chief on behalf of an offender. Formerly they were treated with respect. The children

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

of the High Chief were respectful to them. They cooked for them on board. If they foregathered there was no youth there. The noble youth was of no use in the affairs of the country. The old men drank kava and ruled the land; a noble youth would not be present unless it were to make kava. Later on he would be able to pronounce upon matters: he would know what the men of old had decided.

The custom of "bearing the Sau" or "lifting the Sau" (*thola Sau*) has been discontinued. It is described thus:

> The Chief formerly had a nobleman to "bear his reign," to work for his reign. He bore the stress of it, the Chief leaned upon him. If the father dies, the Chief appoints one of his sons to bear for him, to be his hand and mouth."

Tione Wesele filled this office because he was energetic, enterprising, and brave. The Lakembans feared him because of his energy. If at a ceremonial kava, a lowborn man went to the top of the ring or did something wrong, Tione Wesele would drag him out. If a bad feast were sent in, he would send it back, or seize and whip the givers.

Carpenters, called *matai*, are highly respected in Lau. Two men, Tiafau [1] and Lemaki, coming at different times to Lakemba, established two houses of hereditary carpenters, the titles and the positions of carpenters to nobles. In the Lemaki family the title passes from father to eldest son.

The Tiafau family, who came from Tonga in Christian times, were originally heralds to the Tui Tonga, and later achieved the craft by the skill and strength of their hands. They were experts in making drums (*nafa*).

Lemaki was originally a chief in Manono, in Samoa. With a relative, Leha, he went to Tonga to seek timber for a war canoe; there, hearing of timber in Fiji, they went to Lakemba, and took up their residence with the nobles. For, Lemaki's son having been killed in Ono, as the price of blood and price of work, the nobles of Lakemba asked his family not to return to Samoa, and gave them the land of Lekutu, where they still live.

A clan of Lemaki is in Nggalinggali; some of the family are in Taveuni and Nairai.

The first Lemaki was succeeded by [illegible]kotiale, his son, for in this family the son of the chief wife (*aleva mbau*) is the successor; not the brother, as in Fiji. His son Vulivuli joined the Naivi faction and was killed in the civil war in Naiau. His other son, Maopo, succeeded. He had seventy wives.

Of old the Lemaki merely superintended the work; but later descendants worked with their hands. The Lemaki did not plant but served the nobles, which gave him the right to appropriate pigs, yams, or reserve a crop for himself; he could do so anywhere in Lau, whether the crop belonged to a

[1] Or Taunga, I am not certain as to the title.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

THE ISLAND CHIEF

622 554 Each island has a chief (*tui*) who holds a definite interisland rank, indicated, as is the rank of the island, by the order of presentation of shares at an interisland feast.

The chief of Kambara formerly held highest rank among the island chiefs. He received tribute not only from Kambara, but from Wangava, Namuka, and Komo. Although the chief of Kambara is still respected and feared, he has lost some of his former prerogatives. The first fruits are presented jointly to him and to the village headman by Tokalau only.

The chief of Mothe is of high rank because of his relationship with Vuanirewa, Tumbou (p. 38). He still receives regular, annual tribute of first fruits from all the clans on Mothe.

The chief of Fulanga of Vunikoro clan and the chief of Ongea of Tumbesara clan hold a lower interisland rank. Each, however, receives an annual offering of first fruits from the clans on his island.

The headman of Toyovu subclan of Nasoiya clan on Namuka has recently been given the newly created title of chief of Namuka. No offering of first fruits is presented to him because, according to the natives, there is plenty of food on Namuka, and the tabu on first fruits, which conserves the supply by preventing the inhabitants from eating green fruit, is not necessary.

622 624 The island chiefs perform functions similar to the high chief but on a descending scale, depending on their rank. They are sacred repositories of powerful clan mana inherited from strong ancestral forefathers. They are highly respected and are protected by tabus and etiquette. They have their assistants: a herald, a master fisherman, a chief of crops, or chief's administrator, a master carpenter, an envoy to Lakemba, and a chief of the ceremonial ground. They collect tribute from the villages within their domains in the form of first fruits, feasts, and property on important ceremonial occasions, such as the chief's installation, marriage, death, and canoe and house building.

ASSISTANTS TO THE CHIEF

624 There are several assistants to the chief who rank below the island chief but whose relationship to one another is not clearly defined today. These are the chief's assistants, who have charge of the administration of his chiefdom. Precedence among them differs according to island. The functions of these officers are not rigidly fixed. Seniority and personal skill often help to determine their duties.

The herald (*mata ni vanua*), a hereditary title held by a clan in the land phratry, is the chief's first assistant. He acts as the chief's spokesman and master of ceremonies and receives and presents gifts on behalf of the chief. The title of herald occurs on the islands of Kambara, Namuka, and Fulanga. It is absent on Mothe and Ongea where the duties of the herald are performed

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

by the *takala* which I have called chief's administrator. He is also of the land group. Informants say that the title of herald came with the Tongans, while that of the *takala* is old. The *takala* assists in the presentation and division of the tribute of first fruits. The title of *takala* is absent on Kambara and Namuka, but the titles of *takala* and herald are both found on Fulanga.

The title of *vaka vanua* (*vaka*), which I have called chief of crops, is found on every island. It is held by a clan of the land phratry. The chief of crops has charge of ceremonial presentations to the chief. These are usually in the form of feasts. He organizes all the large island feasts, informs each village of the amount of food it must contribute and prepare, and on the day of the feast receives and inspects the share of each village on the ceremonial ground of the chief's village. He divides the feast into two parts: the chief's share (*mangitchi ni vanua*), and the people's share (*lutu ni mangitchi*); and he presents the chief's share to the chief. If the high chief from Lakemba or his representative is present, the envoy to Lakemba makes the ceremonial presentation. The chief of crops is custodian of the fruits of the land. He has charge of the resources of the island for the offering of first fruits, garden produce, and fish, which is made to the chief of the island at the time of the ripening of each tribute crop or at the tribute fish season. It is his duty to place and remove the tabu on fruits, to arrange for their collection, and with the help of the chief's administrator to make the presentation to the chief. If pigs are needed by the chief he hangs a piece of charred wood from the earth oven outside the door of the chief's house. Then he calls, "Tambu puaka, yei!" (Tabu pigs, yei!) No pigs may be killed until the chief of crops sets a day for the presentation of pigs to the chief. The tabu conserves the food supply, since it prevents the crop from being eaten before it has reached maturity and its highest food value. On islands where food is scarce, such a check is important.

On some islands the duties of the chief of crops are performed by the chief's administrator and conversely. For instance, on Mothe the chief of crops has charge of the fruit crops on the south side of the island, whereas the chief's administrator has charge on the north. The chief's administrator makes the ceremonial presentation to the chief. On Mothe the chief of crops is the chief's assistant and spokesman. At times the duties of the chief of crops and chief's administrator overlap. On Fulanga both assist the master fisherman in communal net fishing. Either the chief of crops or the chief's administrator may cast the first spear. As a rule the younger of the two men gives precedence to the older.

The professional title of master fisherman (*ndɔu ni nggoli*) is held by a clan on each island. The master fisherman is in charge of the communal fishing and turtle fishing and is responsible for the protection of the fishing grounds. When fish are desired for a feast, permission for the communal

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

624 fishing must be obtained from the master fisherman. The request is accom-
226 panied by the ceremonial presentation of kava and is made by representatives from one or more specific clans. The master fisherman receives part of the catch, usually the two largest fish, unless these are tribute fish which must be presented to the chief. The wife or the daughter of the master fisherman leads women's communal fishing expeditions. In recent years the authority of the master fisherman has been breaking down. There is less organized fishing than there was in the past.

624 The professional title of carpenter (*matai*) is held by the headmen of
335 hereditary carpenter clans belonging to either the chief's carpenters or the *lemaki* carpenters.

The following is a tale told of the *lemaki* carpenters:

> The son of the first Lemaki in Lau accompanied Niumataiwalu, the chief of Lakemba, to Ono. One day the people of Ono decided to kill the chief. Lemaki went fishing with the throw net (*tuka*) reputed to have been introduced into Lau by Lemaki. He had a small adz with him for killing large fish. He saw the people running after the chief, so he fought his way to the chief and tried to protect him. The Ono people killed the son of Lemaki and afterward they killed Niumataiwalu. To compensate for this deed the *lemaki* carpenter group was given special privileges and a piece of land called Lekutu (Bush) near Tumbou, Lakemba.

The headman of the *lemaki* carpenter clan does not use the special chiefly vocabulary (p. 64) or the chiefly greeting (*tama*) to the chief. He may intercede (*sorovakina*) with the chief on behalf of a village or an individual, and he may eat food and drink kava in the presence of the chief.

624 Each island chief has a priest. Formerly, as mediator for the clan and its
793 ancestral forefathers and as a seer, the priest served to validate and sanctify the power of the chief. The priest was highly respected and feared. He received a large share of the first fruit offerings, which were presented to the ancestor god (*kalou vu*). The headman of a priest clan usually holds the title of *mbete*. This is largely honorary today, except on Mothe where the priest installs the chief.

624 The *mata ki Lakemba* (face toward Lakemba, envoy to Lakemba) is a
644 hereditary clan title found in every island group. He is the intermedial agent for the island group and the high chief at Lakemba. His duties are to deliver and present tribute to the high chief and to receive him or his representatives when they visit the island. In the latter capacity he is the leader of the reception and presentation ceremonies. The title descends from a man to
[428 his younger brother or to his son—except on Mothe, where it is hereditary in
184] the Nggali clan—and the bearer is chosen by the clan elders.

622 Some villages have a village chief. The chief of Nggalinggali is chosen from either Nanggara or Naivotavota clan. The present chief of Nggalinggali is from Nanggara. The title of chief of Tokalau was, until recently, held by the Matandravu subclan of the Vuanitavola clan. Tareasi Thiva was the last

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

chief of Tokalau. Undu village has a chief called Tui Undu. He is from the Valakevoro clan and receives a village offering of first fruits. The village of Muanaira has a chief from the Nggilo clan.

The title of chief of the ceremonial ground (*tui ra* or *tui rara*) is found on every island. It is held by a clan of the land group. Presentations of food to the chief and subsequent distributions to the people take place on the ceremonial ground. The duty of the chief of the ceremonial ground is to divide the food so that each clan receives its share, according to rank and size.

Clan titles, now obsolete, but formerly found on Kambara are chief headman (*sau turanga*), held by the Nanggara clan headman; master of war (*mbatchi ndau ni valu*), held by Matasoata or Valakevoro clans, Undu; food master (*mbatchi ni kakana*) held by Nawi of Lomatchi.

Rank within the Clan

Rank within the clan is regulated by the principles of primogeniture, seniority, and cross-cousin marriage. The direct descendant of the first-born (*ulu matua*) son of the originator of the clan holds the highest rank within the clan, and of subclans which comprise the clan his takes precedence by seniority. The elder of either sex takes precedence over the younger throughout the lineage in each generation. Rank within the clan is discussed on pages 58-64.

Marriage and Relationship

Marriage

Formerly polygyny was practiced by high ranking men who could afford several wives, especially by the chiefs. Monogamy, however, was the rule among people of lower rank. Polyandry was unknown. Today, as a result of missionary influence, Lauan society is monogamous.

Cross-cousin marriage

A man preferably marries his *watchi* (cross cousin, his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, real or classificatory), but not all marriages fall within the preferred type. Formerly it was not uncommon for a chief to take two sisters as wives or for a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife. It is not rare for a man to marry his brother's widow.

Clan exogamy is the rule and a study of interclan marriage based on clan pedigrees shows that there is a tendency for certain clans to intermarry. This tendency is strongest on Ongea and Fulanga and weakest on Kambara and Mothe. It is probable that cross-cousin marriage is also more frequently practiced on the two isolated southern islands of Ongea and Fulanga and least on Kambara and Mothe. The genealogies from the five islands visited are not sufficient to furnish conclusive data on this point.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

without a plow and draught animal, more systematic hoeing and weeding with adequate tools and the use of manure would improve the crops. However, even such small changes cannot be brought about without a systematic program of education. Since the natives have a strong abhorrence against the use of manure as fertilizer, because they regard it as unclean, either its effect would have to be demonstrated so convincingly as to win converts, or mineral fertilizer would have to be imported. Improved methods of gardening would have to be taught and demonstrated by the village school teacher to the school children. This would be easy for a trained teacher since one of the duties of the children is to compensate the teacher for his time by helping him with his garden.

The problem of the preservation of food against scarcity is not easy to meet in a community where in the first place food is scarce, and in the second place the system of soliciting deprives an industrious man of any hard-earned surplus he may accumulate. Just as the whole economic system works against the accumulation of wealth, so also it discourages the preservation of food, and tends toward the hand-to-mouth existence we find in southern Lau. There are, however, two possibilities in the native system which might be used to encourage the storing of food. One is the custom of presenting the first fruits of the harvest to the chief, and the other is the inter-island ceremonial exchange.

The headman of a clan of the lower class on each island holds a hereditary title (*vaka vanua*) which I have called "chief of crops." Formerly his duty was to impose a tabu regularly on each of the main crops of the island as they matured. He did not raise the tabu until each crop was fully ripe, when the "first fruits" were presented in the form of a cooked feast to the chief, and eaten by the whole island or the village. The "chief of crops" is still an important personage in Lau, but only on the island of Mothe does he perform this function regularly. Each time an offering of "first fruits" is

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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624 241 made, however, part of it might be set aside by the chief or the "chief of crops" to be preserved, according to the native method of burial in a leaf-lined pit. This reserve food would be used only in case of need by the whole community. In the same way, when an inter-island communal exchange is held, part of the food acquired by a famine island might also be set aside and stored. It might be possible to put the hereditary "chief of crops" in charge of the preservation of the island resources, and thus strengthen a native hereditary office which still survives but has recently lost most of its former functions and prestige.

624 226 Another such office which might prove of value if reinforced politically is that of the master fisherman (*ndau ni nggoli*). The natives complain that since the master fisherman has lost much of his former power to supervise the fishing of the island, the catch has dwindled. Fewer fish are caught daily because the fishing grounds are constantly disturbed by small fisher groups, and there are fewer large communal expeditions. If the master fisherman were backed by the government he could systematically supervise the fishing of the island. This would not only increase the food supply but also add zest to life because the natives love a large communal fishing expedition or a turtle hunt.

137 An important source of food which the natives tend to neglect today is collecting in the jungle. Bush food such as the *wangiri* and the *yangai*, which were formerly staples and are now ignored, could be utilized more than they are. *Yangai* sweetened with the *ti* root makes a particularly delicious sweet pudding. Moreover, most islands could accommodate more fruit trees such as breadfruit, Tahitian chestnut and *ndawa* (*Ponetia pinnata*), which are important as food, and since a fruit tree belongs to the man who plants it there would be no difficulty concerning proprietary rights over the fruit. Certainly there are many spots in the jungle where wild yams, also a delicious and nutritious jungle food, would

5: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1949 OQ6 Lau OQ6

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The traditional diet was further safeguarded by an ingenious and self-regulating system of co-operative production and distribution, which encompassed all the local groups in the community. On each inhabited island an hereditary officer called the *vaka vanua* is custodian of the jungle fruits and crops. The traditional role of the crop custodian was to watch the island's food supply and, as each major food crop (whether wild or cultivated) matured, to place a tabu on it. When the custodian considered the crop under tabu to have ripened sufficiently, his traditional role was to remove the tabu and to arrange for the collection of first fruits by village and clan groups. The first fruits were then placed on the village ceremonial ground (*rara*) and divided by the custodian into two portions, one for the island chief and one for the people. The chief's portion was presented to the chief ceremonially by the custodian or by another officer of the aboriginal class, called the *takala*. The portion of the first fruits reserved for the people was divided by still another officer, called the headman of the ceremonial ground (*tui rara*),[20] a title hereditary in an aboriginal clan. It was the responsibility of this official to divide the food so that each clan received a fair share. When crops were abundant, part of the first fruits were set aside to be fermented and stored against time of scarcity. After the first fruits ceremony the people of the island were free to gather the remainder of the crop, each group from its own lands.

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In this island community where food was none too plentiful and famine a constant threat, the institution of the crop custodian functioned, in total context, to conserve and augment the food supply of each island by preventing the crops from being consumed before they had attained their full size and maturity and their highest nutritive value. It thus served as a public health and resources conservation measure of considerable significance to guard against famine, to obtain the optimum size and food value of the crops, to insure a more equitable distribution of the limited food resources of the community as a whole, to build up community health through more adequate nutrition, and to accumulate a surplus in times of plenty for use in times of scarcity. It should be noted that on each island only the major food crops were placed under tabu. These differed from island to island and from season to season, depending on local conditions as judged by crop custodians, and thus the custodian institution had considerable flexibility.

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When the British system of indirect rule was established in Lau, however, the office of crop custodian was not incorporated into the administrative set-up. Indeed, its very existence was probably unknown to Europeans. Moreover, the Lauans soon became confused as to which chief should receive the offering of first fruits—the traditional island chief, whose office had not been recognized officially in the new government system, or the local village chief, an

[20] The *tui rara's* functions were performed on Fulanga by the *tui naro*, an aboriginal clan title.

5: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1949 OQ6 Lau OQ6

officer newly created by British regulation. Consequently the crop custodian, although continuing to function in a limited way on all the inhabited islands of the community (except Namuka where the crops abundantly cover the needs of the population), has lost considerable authority and prestige. The number of fruit and garden crops placed under tabu for first fruits presentation has decreased in number, at least part of each crop being consumed before it has fully matured, especially on the limestone islands. Food is rarely stored against time of famine, and in general the crops are smaller in size than formerly and less valuable from the viewpoint of nutrition.

As part of the production and distribution system mentioned above, each inhabited island also had a master fisherman (called *ndau ni nggoli*), who had charge of all the island's fishing grounds, communal fishing expeditions and turtle hunts. The office of master fisherman is held by a clan belonging to the noble class, except on islands where that class is absent. The traditional role of the *ndau ni nggoli* was to master the fish lore and fishing techniques of the island and to study the habits of various edible species of marine life in relation to the local fishing grounds, the tide and currents, the weather, the lunar cycle, the seasons, and the presence of noxious plants which render edible species poisonous to man. Although men and women caught fish offshore singly or in groups of two or three by means of nets, lines, and spears for their daily household needs without special permission from the master fisherman, they observed his regulation of the fishing grounds and no large, organized fishing expeditions took place without his sanction. Indeed, the master fisherman himself organized and led all communal turtle hunts and most large fishing parties. Women's communal fishing was led by the wife or daughter of the *ndau ni nggoli*.

The institution of the master fisherman functioned to increase the total catch by protecting the local fishing grounds from over-fishing and undue disturbance, and by taking advantage of the various group-fishing techniques in relation to the weather, the seasons, and the habits of various edible species. In a community where fishing provided the major protein constituent in the daily diet and an indispensable part of every feast, this institution operated as a public health measure of prime importance in creating and maintaining a balanced relation between the community and its marine food supply. The traditional functions of this institution and its ecological significance are clarified by the fact that, although the prestige and authority of the master fisherman have not been reinforced by the British and consequently this native official has lost status, he still operates unofficially to a limited extent on every inhabited island in the community. As a result of his lowered status and decreased power, however, informants say that the fishing grounds of the various islands are more disturbed than formerly, that there are fewer organized fishing expeditions, and that the catches are smaller than they used to be.

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date) 1918
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series of side or slanting paces, their bodies swaying in unison, and all in dead silence. When they reached us they deposited their burden at our feet, with a few, almost inaudible, words, and then retreated down the long line, still facing us, in the same manner as they had come. This part was called the *Rogo tabakau*, and signified that they had brought the *Draudrau ni Vanua*[1] as a sign that the representative of the Governor—and therefore of the King—held sway over all that had grown upon the land since the last visit. (The presentation of baskets of earth, to signify that the chief held sway over the actual soil itself, had been made to the first Governor forty years before, on the cession of the Colony to Great Britain, so there was no necessity to repeat this.)

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Our *matapuli*[2] (or aide-de-camp or herald), then touched the *tabakau* in silence, the touch signifying his acceptance, on our behalf, of the emblem.

Then another white-bearded old man came along, also advancing on his knees, with upraised hands grasping a heavy stalk of large green coco-nuts, the nuts themselves, two in number, drooping over and suspended on his left shoulder. One nut represented the visiting chief, and the other the people of the land. He deposited these

[1] Literally, leaves of the land.
[2] This word is often used in old ceremonies in the Lau Islands instead of the Fijian word "mata ni vanua."